

EAST INDIA HOUSE.

D E B A T E

ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF CULTIVATING

S U G A R

IN THE

T E R R I T O R I E S

OF THE

EAST INDIA COMPANY.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

DEBENTURES

IN THE SUM OF ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS

STOCK

OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

AND OF THE EAST INDIA STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

LIMITED

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T E R R I T O R I E S

OF THE

EAST INDIA COMPANY.

WITH THE SPEECHES OF

RANDLE JACKSON,

AND

GEORGE DALLAS, ESQRS.

FOR AND AGAINST

THAT IMPORTANT PROPOSITION.

REPORTED BY

WILLIAM WOODFALL,

LATE EDITOR OF THE DIARY.

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1793.

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D E B A T E

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

S U G G E S T I O N S

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor flatters himself, that he has no need to apologize to the Publick, for the introduction of this Pamphlet; he has in fact, printed it by desire of several respectable East and West India Proprietors, as well as of Gentlemen concerned in the SUGAR TRADE, who naturally wished to preserve the first publick adoption of a branch of traffick, which has already increased tenfold, and which bids fair to become the most extensive and productive Commerce ever carried on between a Parent State and her Colonial Possessions.

The Proprietors of East India Stock will reflect with pleasure, that assertions which might perhaps, at the time, have been imputed by some, to a warm and sanguine temper, have since proved to have been founded upon the most unquestionable data, and that the flourishing state of their affairs has admitted of an ample provision for the liquidation of the Company's debt, a contribution of HALF A MILLION *per annum* to the Publick service, and an addition of TWO AND A HALF *per cent* to their own Dividend.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Editor has to inform the Public, that he has no need to repeat to the Public, for the introduction of this Pamphlet, as has been done, printed by order of several respectable East and West India Proprietors, as well as of Gentlemen concerned in the Slave Trade, who naturally wished to give the first publication of a pamphlet of this kind, which has already reached the public, and which will be to become the most extensive and useful. Commerce ever carried on between a Slave State and her Colonies.

The Proprietors of East India Stock will reflect with pleasure that additions which might perhaps at the time have been made by some, to a warm and sanguine temper, have thus proved to have been founded upon the most unshaken basis, and that the remaining part of their affairs has admitted of an ample provision for the liquidation of the Company's debt, a consideration which will be a great advantage to the Public Service, and to the honor of the Company, and to their own Dividends.

EAST INDIA HOUSE.

GENERAL COURT.

March 15, 1792.

A GENERAL COURT was this day held upon special affairs, which as might be expected, upon a question so important to the Publick and the Company, as the opening a new branch of traffick to India, was very full. The clerk read the following requisition, in consequence of which the Proprietors had been called together.

TO THE HONOURABLE COURT OF DIRECTORS.

" GENTLEMEN,

" WE whose names are undersigned, being Proprietors of East India Stock duly qualified, request you will be pleased to call a General Court of the East India Company ;
" to take into consideration an application to his Majesty's Ministers or to Parliament ; for
" lowering the duties on East India Sugar : a measure highly expedient at this time, when
" the prices of Sugar are so high as to materially injure the consumption both of that article,
" and also of Tea, from which the publick as well as the Company derive such essential
" benefit.

" We have the honour to remain,

" Your most obedient servants,

" RANDLE JACKSON,

" BENJAMIN HAMET,

" JOHN COOPE,

" THOMAS EVERETT,

" JOHN LUBBOCK,

" J. V. COUSSMAKER,

" JOHN FREE,

" WILLIAM BROWN,

" COLIN MACKENZIE."

London, March 9, 1792.

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The minutes of the last Court having been also read;

Mr. *Jackson* rose. He began by observing, that the Court had a right, according to the usual mode of its proceeding, to expect, that those gentlemen who called it *specially*, should assign their reasons for so doing. Special Courts he said, should not be lightly called, but when they were, every Proprietor should conclude, that some great interest was required to be promoted, or privilege to be maintained. It was upon the former ground that those with whom he had the honour to stand connected, had convened together their Co-Proprietors. Their names, he hoped, rendered all apology superfluous, and were in themselves a sufficient pledge for the importance of the subject. They were men, who well understood the respective interests which this question involved, who felt all the importance as well as the just claims of our West India Colonies; who felt also what was due to our East India Colonies; and the moral obligations which we were under to give due encouragement to the industry of those millions of inhabitants whom our power had subdued; and lastly, they were men, capable of abandoning their predilection for either of these transmarine possessions, if it should be found to interfere with the general welfare. Having thus premised, he took a view of the circumstances which had led to the present discussion. He mentioned the price of Sugar, which had gradually risen to a height so intolerable, as to have occasioned a considerable ferment in the publick mind; meetings of the inhabitants of London had been held, a Committee had been appointed to enquire into the cause of the evil, and report their opinion of the best means for obtaining relief. To the talents, the industry, and intelligence of that Committee, it was impossible for him to do justice; suffice it to say, that they had dived into the arcanum of West India Politics, as well as Produce, that they had reported ably on the subject, and concluded with stating their persuasion, that nothing could effectually relieve the publick, but an increased and emulative importation. Under such circumstances, that Committee had addressed themselves to the East India Company as to their next natural connection; and it was for the present consideration of the Proprietors, how far it would be wise to listen to their application.

They were, he said, also under the highest obligations to a Committee of their own Directors, who had given the subject their most serious attention,
and

and after much laborious investigation, had produced a Report, that had thrown more light upon it, and yielded more correct information, than any work that had yet appeared. That Report he said, was too voluminous to be read to the Court, he would therefore merely move, that it should be laid upon the table, and endeavour to describe its [general contents.

It appeared, he said, that the Committee of Warehouses, in endeavouring to carry into effect, one of the most incumbent parts of their duty, namely, the cultivation of our Indian Provinces, had turned their attention to the produce of SUGAR so early as the year 1789, an article which they say had formerly been cultivated in great perfection in the province of Bengal, they at that time ordered a small quantity home by way of sample. In the interim, the Court of Directors had thought fit, on the representation of Lieutenant Paterson, to engage with him to take the produce of a considerable tract of land, which they had granted him for the purpose of trying the experiment of a Sugar plantation. By the Houghton which arrived in March 1791, the Committee received the desired sample. It was put into the hands of different Refiners, who concurred in saying, that if carefully manufactured abroad, it would be found equal in quality to the Sugars of any other Country. What then was the impediment to commencing a Commerce so propitious, that according to the Report upon the table, * it bid fair without acting with hostility towards the West India Interest) to

* "It is not your Committee's wish that the Company should become the hostile opponents or avowed rivals of the West India Merchants in any of the markets, to which they have been accustomed, or are competent to supply ; but as in the present critical situation of affairs, an opening arises for *drawing back to this country a large portion of that foreign trade which it formerly enjoyed, and which as has already been shewn, the French diverted from hence.* Your Committee conceive it would be unpardonable in them to let slip so fair an opportunity, of lending their assistance to effect so great a national object. Under the most favourable circumstances France ever saw, it must have required many years to restore the island of St. Domingo to its former flourishing state: this is therefore the moment for exertions, and, if they are properly directed, there is well grounded reason to expect, that Bengal may be benefited by an export of this commodity to the amount of more than HALF A MILLION *per annum.*"

Vide the Report of the Committee of Warehouses.

bring back to this Country its *foreign SUGAR trade* and to benefit Bengal alone more than HALF A MILLION *per annum*? A duty stared them in the face, so enormous as to operate as a prohibition. Yet this ponderous impost was not originally established by design, but accident. The fact was, that SUGAR not having hitherto been ranked as a staple article of the Company's Commerce, had not found a distinct place in the general tariff; it could only therefore be received under that anomalous class, called *non enumerated*, which generally consisted of trifling *manufactured* articles, such as toys, &c. subject to a duty so high, that when applied to Sugar, it amounted to the sum of 37*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* per cent. so little had the Directors, expected his Majesty's Officers of Customs would insist upon classing Sugar in this manner, that at the publick sale of the recent adventure alluded to, they had declared to the Purchasers, that it would be subject to the *same* Duties and Drawbacks as the Sugar from our West India plantations.

The Committee however concluding, that the reason of the thing would be apparent to his Majesty's Government, and insure an alteration; pursued their researches with unabated vigour, the prospect daily brightened, and that Trade with all its valuable appendages, which the French supplanted us in half a century back, and had preserved till almost the hour in which he was speaking, seemed to extend itself towards us, and court our embrace. The Committee had with a degree of energy, suited to the occasion, called upon their Co-Directors to support them in obtaining that modification of the law, so essential to their hopes. Every collateral circumstance, nay the whole history of the Sugar cane, confirmed the reasoning of the Committee, and warranted their perseverance.

In proof of this assertion, Mr. Jackson proceeded briefly to touch upon the general history of the trade in Sugar, and the various vicissitudes which it had experienced. Its origin he said, was held to have been from China, from whence it passed through Arabia and the East Indies into Europe, before the discovery of the Cape, or that Cabot and Columbus had touched upon the coasts of the new world. About the twelfth century it was planted in Sicily; early in the fifteenth, it found its way to the Madeira and Canary islands, from thence, or, as some think, from the coast of Angola in Africa, it was transplanted to Brazil, where the Portuguese cultivated it with

with so much assiduity, as to retain to themselves, for a long time, the supplying of all Europe. From Brazil very early in the sixteenth century, the Sugar cane was conveyed to Hispaniola, and about the same time to Mexico, Chili and Peru.

The epoch interesting to Englishmen now begun; in the year 1641, it was first planted in Barbadoes. Some Barbadoes settlers had the spirit to go to Brazil, to learn the most approved method of its Manufacture, and soon excelled their Instructors. It was afterwards taken up in the other British West India Islands, and lastly by the Danes, the Dutch, and the French.

The British Planters soon found themselves in a situation to undersell the Portuguese, and laid the foundation of that flourishing Trade, which had since invigorated this country; and which being confined to it by the different restraining and navigation acts, London and Bristol became the Magazines for the middle and northern parts of Europe; and Brazil Sugar fell in consequence, from 8*l.* to 2*l.* 10*s.* per cwt. The export Trade long continued ours, till France paid so much attention to her West India possessions as to supplant us in her turn, and acquire the *foreign market* which she had ever since preserved. This, he said, might be collected from the following statement: In 1729, we *imported* from the West Indies to the amount of 1,500,000*l.* of which we *exported* again *one third*, or 500,000*l.* In 1745 our *Imports* had been reduced to ONE MILLION. This might be still better seen, he said, by the comparative statement of 1742, by which time the French had rivalled us indeed, for in that year they *imported* 122,500 Hds, and exported 80,000 Hds or above *two thirds*, besides their great and notorious clandestine trade to Jamaica and America—While in the same year we imported but 60,950 Hds. and exported only 5 Hds. or *one solitary twelfth*. He mentioned this he said, to shew that notwithstanding the prosperous state of our West India Islands, their whole produce had been required for home consumption; nay the price of Sugar proved they were even unequal to that. The moment was however arrived, when new sources presented themselves and of which times and circumstances invited us to take advantage. St. Domingo is ruined, a general dearth of the article prevailed throughout the West Indies

Indies, and absolute necessity, to say nothing of sound policy, directed our attention to the East.

He would now, Mr. Jackson said, endeavour to apply these facts to the different important interests which they concerned, he would consider them as they respected; first, the publick as Consumers; secondly, the national revenue; thirdly the West India Planters and Merchants; and lastly the Proprietors of East India Stock.

Upon the first point, he contended against the absurdity of calling Sugar a *luxury*; it formed, he said, a main ingredient in almost every medicinal composition. It was essential to the nourishment of the infantine part of the community, to Women under circumstances of domestic confinement, and to many descriptions of infirmity and disease. It was besides a corrective to spirits, to tea, and to the fruits of the Island, so much so, that a bad fruit year was known to make a difference of several thousand hogheads in the consumption of Sugar. That which once might have been considered as a luxury, had lost its nature and its name by long habitual adoption; it was in fact become a positive, an indispensable *necessary* of life. The publick had beheld its progressive rise, and sustained an advance of *one hundred per cent*, with a degree of patience which had done them honour, but which in his opinion gave great additional weight to their present claim, and called upon every liberal minded and thinking man to enquire into the cause of the evil, and administer as much as in him lay to its cure or relief.

Whence then, it would be first asked, arose the grievance? From one of these causes it must arise; namely, a monopoly of the article, a defalcation of import, or an extraordinary increase of consumption. After an assiduous investigation on the part of the Committee of Consumers, the West India Merchants had been most honourably acquitted of even the suspicion of monopoly. The comparative imports and exports had not materially varied; but the consumption, he was prepared mathematically to prove, had increased beyond conception. The difference between the increased imports and exports

exports (for both had increased) had not on an average of the last six years, been more than 20,000 cwt. *per annum*, while the *increased consumption*, fair british consumption, had on an average of the last nine years, been 300,000 cwt. *per annum*. Here then was the cause of the evil complained of, and the discovery declared its only remedy, namely, an increased importation. It was in vain for Government to talk of altering the drawbacks, or checking the bounty, unless they could communicate elasticity to the soil of our Islands; besides, were they to make any alteration unfavourable to the West India Planters, and lower their inducement for sending their Sugars here, the Country would be at their mercy for a single ounce to use, as by 26 Geo. 3. (a circumstance perhaps, not generally adverted to) they might carry them where they pleased south of Cape Finisterre; and the Mediterranean Trade was even now courting them to supply its wants. The only question then which remained for the Consumers, was, whether they should obtain the further quantity which their necessity required, openly or illicitly, whether they should procure it from foreigners, or purchase it from that Company?

As to his second proposition, how far the measure in question would effect the Publick Revenue, though a subject too interesting to pass over, it was of a nature too extensive minutely to discuss. He had before observed, that till very lately, the French had almost wholly engrossed the foreign market for Sugar, such however were the vicissitudes which Countries as well as Men were fated to experience, such the deplorable falling off of the French West India possessions, that those who were lately our Rivals had become our Customers! What was the obvious conclusion? but that this was the moment to strike for the repossession of the invaluable, though long lost *foreign trade*? who that was capable of pursuing this great political advantage throughout its infinite ramifications, who that knew the effect it must have upon the public revenue, that could measure its thousand collateral advantages, such as ship building, insurance, and the various charges of merchandize, but above all, who that knew the value of its certain and necessary appendage, the *carrying trade* (that spirit so propitious to Maritime and Commercial

Countries, and which so rarely returns to the people it has once forsaken) but would be tempted to exclaim with the poet,

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,
“ Which taken in the flood leads on to fortune.”

and readily join with him, in claiming from the hands of his Majesty's Ministers, that equalization of duty, or something near it, without which it would be impossible to avail themselves of the boon held out by fortune.

He should be told perhaps, that our Western Indies, were equal alone to the accomplishment of this commercial *desideratum*, that vigour might be restored to their lands, and that the next year's crop might be so ample as to make up for all former deficiency, fact and experience opposed themselves to this belief; when our Islands were at their meridian point of prosperity, when they could afford their Sugars at half the present price, still the French possessed the foreign market. In short the Islands were not equal to the present demand of Great Britain alone, at any fair or reasonable price; last year's crop was not bad, neither was that of the year before, yet Sugar had risen 100*l. per cent* above its medium price. But it had been hinted in a late Memorial, that the troubles in the French West Indies, could not last for ever, and that their Islands might soon become more productive. There was in this intimation, Mr. Jackson said, more than met the ear; it was a fact not generally known, but which he called upon any Gentleman to rise in his place and deny, that great quantities of Sugar were smuggled from the foreign West India Islands into the British, and afterwards brought to this Country as their own Produce; inasmuch, that some British Islands were known to export several thousand hogsheds more than they could possibly produce. This had been emphatically called, a *harmless fraud*, because such Sugars paid in this Country the same duty, as those which they were passed off for. Harmless, he said, perhaps it might be in that single particular, but insisted on its being a conduct mischievous beyond measure in its general consequences; it was a fraud upon the Legislature, a fraud upon our carrying trade, and consequently upon the revenue at large; a fraud upon every British possession capable of raising the Sugar Cane, and a fraud upon the millions of our Indian fellow subjects, who from the time that conquest made them ours, became entitled to our encouragement, protection and support. What! should

should we plant and water the French lands of St. Domingo? should we go to the Spanish settlements, or to the Brazils to purchase Sugar? while our countrymen offer us the article, and solicit only a preference to foreigners? It was too monstrous a proposition to be tolerated by any Government whatever.

But neither was it, Mr. Jackson said, compatible with the West India interest itself, which he would now consider. No person acquainted with the immense resources in the soil of India, and with the hopes which already pervaded its Inhabitants as to this new traffick, but must see that the question was not, whether the East or the West India Merchant should exclusively possess the Sugar trade, but whether foreigners, or what was worse, illicit British traders, should run away with it from both? He confessed, that great consideration was due to the West India interest, upon which he passed some strong eulogiums; he admitted how much this Country had derived from it by import and export, and how much it had contributed to support that fleet which had maintained us against all the world. The parent state owed them every indulgence which she could grant, consistent with her duty to the rest of her children. But here no injury was meant to that respectable body; if they would consider the matter with temper, they would find it their true interest to conciliate and co-operate with the East India Company; to say nothing with respect to the risk they run of checking consumption, and changing the habits of the present Consumers by continued high prices, their very trade in the article was at stake. It was now admitted, that Sugar *must* flow into the kingdom after a certain time; ships were going from all parts of the world to fetch it. The Americans particularly pressed forward with astonishing rapidity; they had already planted commercial agents on the coasts of India, where no restraining acts could reach them, and where they might mock the short arm of the British Legislature. If no competition was found in the India market, Foreigners would buy the Sugars at their own price; and it was a notorious fact, how much cheaper they could bring them home; the difference in their charges of merchandize alone, would enable them almost to annihilate our export trade: but if, on the other hand, the East India Company from being admitted to a fair participation in the trade here, became competitors with these Foreigners in India, the price would soon be raised above the purchase of
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the latter, for the Company could afford to give a much better price: she was buying of her own subjects, to enrich whom, was to enrich herself; and paying perhaps with manufactures, upon which she had previously gained a profit. This circumstance, added to that great difference of freight to which we were unfortunately subject, and to the difference of insurance and of interest upon capital, from the different length of the respective voyage operated as a strong protecting duty to the West India Planters against their being underfold. It was in vain then that the latter sought the coercive interference of the British Senate, unless Parliament with its breath could blast the kingdoms of the East. The spirit of cultivation was abroad and would find room; lay it in Bengal, it would spring up in Benares; check it in Benares, it would be found in the country of the Mahrattas; root it out there with fire and with sword, the hills and the valleys in the Mysore dominions would laugh us to scorn, and pour forth the abundance of their produce into the bosom of Europe! Away then with this unnatural opposition; Let the East and West India Proprietors think of themselves as they were, the right and left hands of the Country. Let them unite for their mutual protection; let them be free and liberal of communication; let all unfounded jealousies, all narrow maxims, give way to principles of general good, and they would render Britain by their joint exertions, the great emperium of Commerce, as he thanked God, she was the meridian of peace, liberty, and safety!

That which he had proposed last to consider, namely, their distinct interests as Proprietors, Mr. *Jackson* said was a point too palpable to call for much observation. Sugar he had before stated, was formerly an article of considerable traffick in the Province of Bengal, and he need only mention the advantages then derived from it, to shew the necessity of again encouraging its cultivation; it formed a remittance to the Western Coast of India for cotton, an article essential to our Bengal manufactures, and which had been since paid for in specie, with an exchange extremely unfavourable, while on the other hand our Western Provinces had been obliged to send their Cotton to China, or Specie to Batavia, to buy of the unthankful Dutch this very article of Sugar, which Bengal was used to furnish. We also then supplied the Troops with our own Rum; we now sent cash for that

that article also, to Batavia, Ceylon, and Goa. Sugar he observed declined about the time of our gaining the Devannee, but that was not the only produce which failed at that melancholy period, the damp to cultivation which succeeded that celebrated conquest was general and deadly; and though it invested us with the finest tract of country under heaven, the revolution which it produced was certainly most calamitous to the natives. He would draw a veil, he said, over the havock of the sword, and blot, if possible, from remembrance the ensuing famine, which swept from the land a third of its inhabitants! or if remembered, let it be only for the purposes of justice to the posterity of the sufferers; all they asked or required was an encouragement to labour: Was this unreasonable from Subjects to their Sovereign? Yet so meekly were their claims asserted, so modestly put in, that seldom had they made due impression, but through the sensibility or patriotism of European Philosophers. He rejoiced that such had been found both among our Directors here, and Governors abroad; and that great encouragement had been for some time past extended to the agriculture of India. But it had been reserved for an Honourable Friend of his* near him, too near indeed to say what he felt upon the occasion, to give it permanency and effect. The Mocurrery System, which his Honourable Friend had brought forward, and which Lord Cornwallis had adopted with a liberality and promptitude becoming his great mind, had given at length to the landholders a property in the soil; formerly when they held leases of only two or three years, and even those not certain, they felt no incentive to improve; and at length esteemed it an adverse speculation. They preferred to exhaust the pith and marrow of the soil, making up their minds to abandon at the end of their term to a poorer tenant. The scene was now changed! no sooner were they assured of reaping that which they sowed, of enjoying their improvements themselves during life, and handing them down to their children, then all was assiduity, cheerfulness and hope; the sabre was exchanged for the ploughshare, the dagger for the pruning hook; the savage was allured from his fastness, the robber from his mountains, to taste in the plains of Bengal and Benares, the blessings of peace, plenty, and civilization! The prospect which it opened to every British mind, was magnificent beyond

* Mr. Thomas Law, late Member of the Council of Revenue, at Calcutta.

description! Our manufacturers here begun to complain of prosperity itself, and to dread the suspension of their works from a deficiency of the raw material. We were sending to one country for Rice and Tobacco, to another for Hemp, to a third for Hides, and to foreign parts in general to purchase a variety of articles, (frequently with specie) which might be cheaply obtained from our settlements in India. It seemed he said, as if Providence when it took from us America, would not leave its favourite people without an ample substitute; or who should say, that Providence had not taken from us one member, more seriously to impress us with the value of another? America was indeed rising fast upon us, she was offering irresistible terms to British Seamen, and insinuating herself into the *carrying trade*. She already shone in arts, manufactures, and mechanics, and threatened a speedy independence upon the ingenuity of the eastern world. What had the rest of Europe to balance against this fluctuation in human affairs, this great change in the order of things? Russia excepted, little or nothing; while we possessed an Empire three times as large as Great Britain, containing twenty-five millions of people, whose habits, like those of the Americans, were at present frugal, and whose labour was cheaper. If Government should prove themselves to know the value of this gem, and he had no reason to doubt but they would, if those whom that Court might delegate to the management of its affairs, should wisely and vigorously administer them, nor ever suffer any partial interest whatever to predominate over the general good, he would assert in the face of the world, and stake his character upon the issue, that there existed in the East India Company, a capability of speedily paying off its incumbrances, increasing their own dividend, and so aiding the Country by that *surplus* of profit to which she was by law entitled, as to enable her still further to lighten the publick burthens, and promote the liquidation of her tremendous debt. Let not Government then check this infant effort, this first fruit of that humane and enlightened system to which he had alluded, but rather treat them as Subjects than as Aliens; as Children than as Strangers; let it not persist in an impost prohibiting in its effect, though not so in its original intention, but recollect that as the Company flourished the Country would grow strong, and that by supporting the one it sustained the other. Such, he said, was the object which he believed the General Court wished the Directors again to press upon the Minister; and such the purport of those

those Resolutions which he held in his hand, and now begged leave to offer to their consideration on the part of his colleagues and himself.

At a general Court of the United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies, held at their House in Leadenhall-street, on Thursday the 15th March, 1792, at twelve o'clock at noon.

Resolved unanimously, that it appears to this Court, that the present enormous price of Sugar is owing to the annual importation of that article being very unequal to the increased consumption in Great Britain, and the demand for exportation.

That the East India Company having been called upon by the publick to assist them, have taken the subject into their most serious consideration; and are of opinion, that they can speedily and permanently supply a considerable quantity of Sugar for the relief of Great Britain, provided they are placed on the same footing with respect to duties and drawbacks as the West India Planters.

That the present duty of 37l. 16s. 3d. per cent, on East India Sugars, while West India Sugar pays only 15s. per cent. was purely accidental, and not fixed with any prohibitory view, Sugar not having ranked among the Company's imports at the time of establishing the present tariff, it was not even named, and therefore can only now be received under the head of manufactured goods non enumerated, at 37l. 16s. 3d. per cent *ad valorem*.

That the importation of East India Sugar is not only essential to the relief of the British Consumer, but of the utmost moment to the publick at large, who besides profiting by the increase of revenue, which must arise from an increased importation, are by law intitled to three fourths of all the profit, which may be made by the East India Company, above eight per cent. upon their capital.

That if the importation of East India Sugar is not allowed (the present duty operating as a prohibition), the Sugar Trade, and the carrying Trade attached to it, must inevitably be driven into the hands of foreigners, who have already sent, and are still sending ships from various parts of Europe and America to India to purchase that article.

That therefore, it is absolutely essential to the relief of the British Consumer, the prosperity of the Public Revenue, and the preservation of the Sugar Trade, with its attendant carrying Trade to Great Britain, that Sugar (being the produce of the British

territories in the East Indies) be received into this country upon equal terms with Sugar produced by other plantations,

That the Court of Directors be requested to lay these Resolutions before the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, accompanying the same with their own earnest representations in the name of this court: That they be further requested to take such other steps as to them shall appear necessary to obtain an equalization of duty, and to lay their proceedings before a General Court.

Mr. *Law* said, that whatever might have been his intentions, the subject had been so fully and so ably discussed by his Honourable Friend, that he should merely say, that from his own observation, and his long residence in the country, he knew his Honourable Friend's statements to be fact, that the question did not lay between the East and West India Merchants, but between foreigners and both, he therefore begged leave to second the Motion.

Mr. *Dallas* said, the learned Gentleman (Mr. Jackson) had brought forward so much matter, and enforced it with so much eloquence, that however the court might differ with respect to the utility of his propositions, they must be unanimous in their opinion of the justice he had done them. He felt, he said, all the importance of the question, which had been rightly asserted, to involve interests of the utmost magnitude. He had endeavoured to divest his mind of every prejudice, and consider it upon the broad ground of public good. If he had any prejudices, indeed, they might naturally be supposed, to apply to that place with which he was known to have been so much connected. But much as he regarded the East India interest, and immense as he knew the consequence of the West to be, neither one nor the other were for a moment to be put in competition with the interest of the public at large. He saw the question pregnant with mischief to the country, and should reason therefore upon the grounds of its inutility, its impolicy, and its injustice. It appeared to him, that in any application to Parliament for the introduction of East India Sugars at a reduced duty, there were two questions of material moment to be considered. First, whether it was consistent with the interest of the country so to do? and secondly, whether such a measure would not interfere with existing engagements to our West India Colonies? in the first case he was satisfied; it was adverse to the general interests of
England.

England, for reasons he should immediately state; and in the next, it appeared to him to be incompatible with the Guarantee under which that property has been considered to be held; at least, it had hitherto been the policy of this country, to support and patronise it; and to foster its increase by various incentives to the industry of the planters. He was therefore, he conceived, warranted in assuming, that what had hitherto been the policy of this country with respect to her West India Planters, has been deemed wise and expedient, inasmuch as it is the result of experience; and we ought therefore seriously to consider, before we proposed to depart from it, materially, what effects are likely to flow from any convulsive change in so important a branch of the national resources. If it could be made to appear, that the prosperity of India would be promoted by such a measure, and that England would not suffer, in that case the Resolutions moved, would meet his anxious wishes, and command his warmest praise. But he feared the reverse; and he would submit the reasons which induced him to entertain these apprehensions; he offered them with deference—he felt they would be received with indulgence. Mr. Dallas then laid it down as a general commercial principle, *that that Country, or Colony, which consumes the greatest quantity of our own manufactures, and domestic produce, is undoubtedly of the first consequence to the Parent State.* This proposition he conceived would be admitted by all; and it was by this principle that he ought to investigate the merits of this important question. What then did India take from Great Britain? the total amount of all our exports to that country, under every denomination, he believed, did not exceed ONE MILLION, and the returns consisted principally in articles, which if they were not the medium of remitting the revenues of that country to this, might undoubtedly be said to interfere with our home manufactures. But far different indeed was the case of the West India Planters. They exist principally upon the produce of the mother country; they employ numerous fleets, a capital of SEVENTY MILLIONS of money, and the surplus of all their produce, is poured into the lap of the Mother Country, whilst from its nature it can never, like the commodities of the East, interfere with our own manufactures. Let it also be remembered, that it is a produce, which from restrictive laws must be landed here, whilst that of our Oriental possessions various in its nature, and unfettered by restraints, is dispersed

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through

through a thousand different channels, all tending to enrich those vast and valuable acquisitions. In short, it may be truly said that there is scarcely a species of commerce, or a branch of manufacture in this country, whose prosperity is not in some degree connected with that of the West India Islands; while the very freight out and home is an object of such immense consequence, that it often equals the value of the property shipped. Such in a few words is the relative nature of our intercourse with those islands, and with India; and it required but little reflection to perceive the vast advantages derived to Great Britain, from the intercourse with the former. What constituted this superiority of advantage? why, undoubtedly this great and important reason—*that their produce being solely and totally the return of our goods and manufactures are consequently a clear gain to the nation.* Hence it was, that they contributed so much to animate our industry, and to encrease our wealth; and hence it was, from the extent of their trade, and their support of our fisheries, that they contributed in fact to what was still a more important consideration, to the protection of our independance, by the augmentation of our naval power. When therefore these circumstances were duly considered, he did not imagine we would consider it advisable to relinquish a positive, long established and permanent advantage, in pursuit of a new, a distant, and precarious benefit; by preferring Sugar Colonies on the other side of the Cape of Good Hope to those within our own reach in the Atlantic Ocean. Having made these few observations with respect to the comparative advantages resulting to Great Britain, from her commercial intercourse with the two countries, he now begged leave to apply those principles, upon which he had argued, to the immediate case before them. It might be said, it was not intended to impair the value of our West India Colonies. In what respect were the Resolutions adverse to their prosperity? In what respect would their productive power be diminished by opening the market indiscriminately? Would the existence of a rivalry, which commercial policy appeared to approve, be productive of other than beneficial consequences? To this he could only reply, he conceived it would; and that the benefit India might derive therefrom, would be but feeble, contrasted with the loss our Colonies might sustain, if the growth of their produce was discouraged. At present they were doing well; India was flourishing; and Great Britain

was

was deriving the most solid advantages from both. These were important truths, from whence instructive inferences might be drawn. He believed there was no person acquainted with the nature of the trade carried on between this Country and the West India Islands, who would not readily admit, that a general unqualified importation of Sugar from Asia, unrestricted in quantity, and upon equal terms, (as proposed in the Resolutions) would be fatal to the Proprietors of estates in the Western hemisphere. And all who like himself, were acquainted with the Company's possessions in India, will acknowledge, that they do thrive, and will continue to flourish, even if their Sugars were never admitted into England; because as great Provinces, ~~they~~ have a variety of resources and produce within themselves, that will always ensure their prosperity. But the West India Islands have nothing to support them, but the commerce of their Sugars; if that fail, if they lose that only source of support, they must return to that original wildness, from whence they were rescued by the industry of their cultivators. He thought that East India Sugars, as well as others, should be admitted with due limitation; but he conceived, that good policy directed that we should continue to our West India Colonies, that preference, to which they had been so long habituated, and to which they had established so just a claim. If the West India Islands did not produce a sufficient quantity, both for home consumption and exportation, it would undoubtedly be wise to annul that preference, and open the market generally. But was this really the case, as contended for by the learned Gentleman who moved the Resolutions? if such were the fact, whence did it arise, that in 1774, when no rivalship existed, when no other sugars were imported, but those from the West Indies, that the market was so glutted with them, that many of the Planters were ruined, and forced to sell the produce of their estates at a considerable loss? was not this a fact well known? and was it not equally true, that for years following, almost every commercial house connected with them, had materially suffered? Has it been established by public investigation, that the home consumption has not materially increased? all this went to prove that the West India Islands have a great surplus for exportation, after all our home demands, and that temporary causes of scarcity ought not to excite extraordinary measures of rigour. It is true our exportations had been increased in an unusual degree, and that had the natural effect of enhancing the price upon the

public. But this increase of export was only of a temporary nature, and must end with the cause which gave rise to it, so as to reduce it again to its natural level. The cause which increased the exportation might never again exist, whilst the means proposed to counterbalance it, would have a lasting and ruinous consequence in its effect. If then a very plentiful season throughout the West Indies generally could have produced such consequences to the proprietors of estates in that quarter, when they had no competition to oppose, what would be their situation, if in addition to such an overplus, they had to meet in the market an equal, or perhaps a superior quantity of East-India Sugars? undoubtedly it might conduce to their ruin.

He hoped therefore, this question would be examined in that liberal manner by the Company which distinguished the principles of their Directors upon every occasion where the public weal was connected with their measures; and that they would consider it in the broad light of what was eventually productive of benefit to the nation, and not merely what might be remotely productive of advantage to themselves. In that case he had no doubt but they would perceive it to be fraught with impolicy and injustice. Whence, he asked, arose the clamour which had been so industriously circulated to render the West India interest obnoxious to the nation? Was it all about the price of Sugar? No, we might as well fly out when corn was too dear—the same cause occasioned both, bad crops, and frequent unforeseen accidents, which though of an unavoidable, were generally of a temporary nature. Was it never at a high price before? Was it dear only here? Was it not so all over Europe, owing in great measure to the troubles in the French West India Islands? Was not the complaint general? and was there not every reasonable ground to conclude it must soon be removed? The expected increase in our crops was not less than 36,000 hogsheds, and in the French 33,000, making in the whole 69,000 hogsheds, while the deficiency in St. Domingo was estimated at only 46,000 hogsheds; besides which, there was room for further cultivation, if the Country continued to the Colonies, that preference they had a right to expect, under the faith of implied compact, under a reliance upon the most sacred adherence to her Colonial laws, upon which they had embarked TWENTY MILLIONS of capital, and pledged the whole

whole fortunes of themselves and their posterity. Was this a light consideration? Were those fortunes and that posterity to be ruined, to remedy an evil of a momentary nature, and which must soon remedy itself long before the arrival of Sugars from the East Indies. But were the public only to look on one side of the question, or had the high price of Sugar deprived them of all consideration? Had they forgotten the prodigious revenue derived from those islands? the immensity of our exports? the rigid laws by which they were bound up? the restraint upon their navigation, under that compact to which he had alluded? and by which we monopolized them entirely as to purchase, and sale. Surely, it appeared to him, that all these circumstances ought to make a just impression upon the public mind. Had not such respectable names as he had heard read, appeared to the requisition, he should have considered it, as proceeding from motives less patriotic than those from whence he knew it to flow.

But let us forget for a moment the question of present relief to the public; and examine that of equity between them and the West India islands; let us enquire, if they on their part are not bound to make some sacrifice to that principle; "*fiat justitia ruat cælum*," a long time since the ancestors of many of the present proprietors of West India estates planted and cultivated those Colonies at great peril to themselves of constitution and fortune; many a life and many a princely fortune had been sunk in the attempt; an attempt which never would have been made but under the implicit compact of mutual monopoly, and the plighted protection of national support. While it answered the end of Britain all was well; while Sugar was low, and planters going to ruin, no complaints on her part that the article was too cheap; no suggestion to the relief of the islands; no offer of those advantages of unfettered trade, which alone could compensate them. But when at length after great loss, hazard and toil, the success of their labours appeared; when they had reached their meridian, and began to enjoy their harvest, all was hostility and anger. In a moment we forgot the unspeakable advantages we had derived from them through a long series of years; that they stood by us with unshaken loyalty in war, and enriched us in peace. That at this very moment they were the pillar of our commerce and possessions, which all Europe looked

looked on with envy, all was to be forgotten, all to be sacrificed to ideal prosperity, new fangled systems and false philosophy. He would now, he said, meet the policy of the question, and upon that great ground which he had first mentioned, namely, the public good; and he hoped to prove that the measure in contemplation, was not merely injurious in its intention, but unwise in its principle.

This was an age, Mr. Dallas said, of system and speculation. Men seemed in the contemplation of distant objects, to forget to estimate the blessings which they possessed. Great Britain had long pursued one settled line of conduct with regard to her distant territories. She had bound them, it is true, to herself by rigid laws, but she had extended to them, at the same time, complete protection. She had fixed prohibitory duties upon some of their respective productions, that they might not clash together to the discomfiture of each other. She had laid it down as a maxim of wisdom, as well as of morals, to preserve her faith inviolate, and admitted that there was a political value in character; under these principles both had thrived, herself and her Colonies had increased and flourished. Where then (he beseeched the Court as members of the publick to reflect) could be the wisdom in departing from this ancient system, to adopt expedients fanciful and uncertain? Where the good sense in forsaking and exposing to ruin a settled commerce, for one far more distant, and uncertain in its duration. To him it appeared to be true policy to preserve it unimpaired. Far more was it for the interest of Great Britain to encourage Bengal, and our other dependencies in Asia, to promote the growth of these articles which she cannot be supplied with from her own Colonies, and which she is obliged to purchase from foreign Countries. By these means, we shall derive all the advantages of the one, without destroying the benefits of the other. We shall increase our commerce and navigation, and snatch from foreign nations a considerable share of their advantages. But if, acting against this principle, we encourage an unlimited importation of Asiatic Sugars, we destroy a monopoly of navigation to throw it open to Europe. And even then the object of the measure will be defeated by the most obvious causes. Foreign powers are not restricted from visiting India. Russia, Sweden, Germany, who all take Sugars from us, will go to India to purchase

purchase them ; and as it is well known, that they build and navigate ships cheaper than we do, what is the consequence ? they will bring home Sugars to our own markets, and undersell us. So that it is clear that such a measure can only tend to increase the navigation and wealth of foreign powers at the expence of injuring our own. Both upon the grounds of justice and policy therefore, it appeared to him to be inexpedient. Mr. Dallas said, that he certainly agreed in opinion with the Minister for the department of India, that the day was not distant, when we might look to encreased resources from our possessions in India. He had no doubt at a season of peace, but new channels of wealth would open themselves to the public view ; not from the acquisitions of conquest, but the exertions of industry. Bengal was a field that could supply us with all those articles which we purchase from foreign nations. The soil was peculiarly favourable for the cultivation of Indigo, Hemp, Cotton, Tobacco, all of which we now get from America and other places, at the expence of double freight. Let us therefore cherish and encourage the growth of those articles which do not interfere with our Colonies ; by so doing, we shall improve the one, and not impair the other. This appeared to him, to be the proper policy for this country to pursue, and he believed it would be found to accord with the opinions of the best informed upon the subject. Having trespassed thus much upon the attention of the Court, he should conclude by appealing to their judgment, whether among those events which were yet within the womb of futurity, it was most likely we should lose our Colonies, or be deprived of Bengal ? He believed the latter, the sword had put us in possession of India, the sword might take it away. The country was extensive ; it consisted of MANY MILLIONS of people, who became every day more enlightened, who were encreasing fast in population, and becoming powerful from industry. He rejoiced at their prosperity as sincerely as any man ; he too was sensible of the blessings which may attend the Mocrery system brought forward by his Honourable friend, and how much in the event of its success, the MILLIONS he had made happy would have to thank him for ; but he could not but reflect that this power, and this population might ultimately lead to independence ; too late would it then be to recur to that commerce which our fickleness had diverted into other channels, or our injustice ruined. Sugar was no longer
a luxury

a luxury ; it was now become a *necessary of life*. We ought therefore in prudence to look to that place for it, where we could soonest obtain it, and with the least difficulty, danger and expence. Surely then, the proximity and insular situation of the West India Islands, point them out as the place of all others, from whence we should draw our supplies ; and clearly shewed how impolitic it would be to transfer our reliance from these, to sources more distant, where the industry of the inhabitants may be successfully directed to objects which do not interfere with the prosperity of our Colonies. Under therefore every conviction of the inutility, the injustice, and the impolicy of the measure, he should give it his hearty negative.

Mr. *Twining* said, he should not at that hour, detain the Court, however customary and just it might be, in complimenting the talents of the two Honourable Gentlemen, he should merely make an observation or two as a plain merchant. The Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, had gone all along upon the supposition, that the measure was brought forward with views hostile to the West India merchants, and if carried, must end in their ruin. He believed the one apprehension was altogether ill-founded, and the other impossible and out of the question. The Honourable Gentleman, he said, had proved too much for his argument; if Sugar was an unprofitable article to bring by the East India Company, the West India Merchants were safe; if on the other hand, it was worth their while to bring such quantities, as to distress the West-India Interest, it must at least be profitable to themselves. It was however to his mind a very simple proposition, that when the public felt themselves in want of an article, they had a right to purchase it. Equally plain was it, that if the Company felt that great article of their commerce Tea, affected by the dearness of Sugar, which drove people to abstain from both, they had a right to remedy the evil and bring their own Sugar. He could not subscribe to the doctrine of the learned Gentleman who opened the Debate that an alteration in the drawback, might induce the Planter to send it elsewhere. He had no doubt, but there was room in the country for a much greater quantity of Sugar than was brought in. The price was the proof of the scarcity; he said, he should therefore vote for the Resolutions, shrewdly observing, that if it were true, as the Hon. Gentleman had asserted, that the West India

India Islands had reached their meridian, and even at that meridian point of perfection found themselves unequal to supplying the country, it became highly necessary to look elsewhere.

Mr. *Baring* (Deputy Chairman) said, he did not see any objection to the Resolutions. He submitted the alteration of a phrase, with respect to the equalization of duty. He stated the conduct of the Court of Directors, that it had early and earnestly occupied their attention. He commented upon the Report, and said, that though he admitted the greater part of its contents, he had declined signing it, from a belief that the Committee were much too sanguine in their expectations: he thought that Sugar might be raised advantageously, and that it might be in time a beneficial article of traffick; but doubted the propriety of our turning our attention from other settled articles: he doubted, also, if we should be able to bring any great quantity: he mentioned likewise the appropriation of the present investment, both as to tonnage and money. He utterly denied any thing like ungenerous competition with the West India interest; and was decidedly of opinion, that we could never undersell the West India Merchants, and consequently not materially injure them.

Alderman Le Mesurier said, that though he had had no communication with the Gentlemen who called the Court, he thought they had done themselves great honour, particularly the gentleman who had so ably opened the Business. He had great respect for the Honourable Gentleman who spoke afterwards so eloquently, but he must say, that there was nothing that had fallen from his learned friend, or that was contained in his motion, to warrant the suspicion of one invidious thought with respect to the West India Merchants; nor could he subscribe to the West Indies having been of most consequence to the country. Mr. Le Mesurier mentioned the circumstances of the late war: he afterwards commented upon the Report: he said, his firm conviction went with it; and though it had not been so fortunate as to have a name of so much weight as the Deputy Chairman's, he must observe, that it had been honoured by the Chairman's, and that of every other Member of the Committee. He defended the Resolutions, and thought they should stand as they did.

Mr. Thornton observed, that the Deputy Chairman's principal objection seemed to be, that we could not speedily get a quantity of Sugar, or bring the article to any great degree of perfection. He said, it was neither their wish nor intention to pour it in from all quarters upon the country. The question was, whether they should exert themselves on both sides the Bar to get rid of a duty prohibitory, though accidental? He denied the existence of anything like a compact, and jocosely observed, that he had not discovered any of those signs of wretchedness and persecution among the West India Merchants, which the Hon. Gentleman had so pathetically described, nor did he see any immediate danger of they or their children being undone. He thought the learned Gentleman who had brought the business forward deserved all their thanks, and he declared that he was heartily with the Resolutions.

Mr. David Scott followed upon the same ground. He set Mr. Dallas right upon the Exports, which under various denominations, amounted to nearer a MILLION than *an hundred thousand pounds*.

Mr. Dallas explained. He said, he had only mentioned the export to Bengal.

Mr. Scott said, that even then the Exports to Bengal were last year near *one hundred and fifty thousand*, and which was but a small part of the whole, as the Hon. Gentleman had neither reckoned the private trade, nor what was called the clandestine, or neutral: though those two heads comprehended almost all the wants of that vast Settlement. He further reminded the Hon. Gentleman, that in speaking of the West Indies, he had not mentioned any particular Island, but had spoken of the whole collectively.

Lord Kinnaird said, he came down to that Court, he believed, as free from prejudice as any man. Something like native or local prejudice attached in a degree to most men; but upon questions involving the publick interest, he hoped he should ever rise above it. What had fallen from the two Hon. Gentlemen, and the Directors
who

who had spoken afterwards, had convinced him more than ever of the great importance of the question, and if it was meant to divide the Court that day, or to send the question to a ballot, he should first take the sense of the Court upon the propriety of printing the Report which laid upon the table, and which had been so often alluded to. He thought it, for the honour of the Directors, that it should be printed, that it might be seen whether they had taken up this question upon fair and reasonable speculation, or as had been hinted, had given way to little prejudices, and ungenerous rivalship. He was one, who always thought that emulative commerce was best; that Commerce thrived by competition; but that at the same time, all due regard ought to be paid to every compact, positive or implied, the objects of which were fully entitled to protection. The Hon. Gentleman who opposed the motion, had certainly removed an opinion which he had uniformly held till he came into Court, namely, that Sugar could not be brought with any profit from India. The Hon. Gentleman, however, had, like other great orators, played *ambo dexter*, and by proving that the West India Islands would be ruined, had proved, that the East India Company could sell with them, and consequently bring their Sugars to a profit. His Lordship recommended printing the Report.

The strangers were ordered to withdraw; the question was put, and carried in favour of the Resolutions by a great majority.

Lord *Kinnaird* then moved the following Resolutions, which were seconded by Mr. *Law* and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED.

“ That the Report of the Committee of Warehouses relative to the culture and produce of SUGAR in the East Indies, be printed for the use of the Proprietors.”

RESOLVED,

“ That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Court of Directors, for the steps which they have taken relative to the importation of Sugars from the East Indies.”

The Court then adjourned *sine die*.

THE END.
